



# A Healthy Smile, A Healthy Life

Understanding the Link Between  
Oral Health & Wellness



# Invest Time in Your Teeth



Is your smile your best feature? It should be!

Sure a mouth full of glistening, pearly whites can help you look and feel your best and give you a boost of confidence. But a healthy smile has more than cosmetic value. Your smile is also a window into your body's overall wellness, and it can help determine your risk for a variety of health issues.

Research shows that many dental health problems are linked to serious conditions, such as diabetes and cancer<sup>1</sup>. And these conditions may be caused by preventable occurrences, like stained teeth and cavities. By establishing a good oral health care routine, you can protect your health – and your smile!

When it comes to dental health, the best offense is a strong defense. Many common dental problems can be prevented with good daily oral hygiene, regular check-ups and a healthy lifestyle. That's why your Delta Dental plan focuses on preventive care as the best way to keep small issues from becoming bigger, more costly problems later on.

<sup>1</sup>"Oral Health for Adults." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Oral Health, December, 2006. [www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/publications/factsheets/adult.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/publications/factsheets/adult.htm).

*Please note: This brochure is intended for informational purposes only. Always consult with a licensed dentist to discuss the best ways to improve or maintain your dental health.*

# 5 Habits for Healthy Teeth

(and a healthy you!)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Oral Health offers the following tips for healthy teeth and gums at every stage of life<sup>2</sup>:

## 1 Clean your teeth & gums

Brush gently at least twice a day, with special attention to the gum line, to rid your mouth of food and bacteria. Floss at least once a day. Replace your toothbrush every three to four months, or sooner if the bristles are frayed.

## 2 See your dentist

Regular check-ups will help identify any dental problems early on, when they can be more easily treated.

## 3 Keep away from tobacco

Smokers are four times as likely as nonsmokers to develop periodontal (gum) disease. Using any form of tobacco – including pipes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco – increases the risk of oral and throat cancers, and oral fungal infection (candidiasis). In addition, because smokeless tobacco contains sugar, users are more likely to develop tooth decay.

## 4 Eat healthy

Avoid snacking on sugary or starchy foods, especially between meals. Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables helps stimulate the flow of saliva, which helps remineralize tooth surfaces to ward off tooth decay.

## 5 Limit alcoholic drinks

Heavy drinking increases the likelihood of developing oral and throat cancers.

<sup>2</sup> "Oral Health for Adults." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Oral Health, December, 2006. [www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/publications/factsheets/adult.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/publications/factsheets/adult.htm)

# Learn More

To learn more about how to maintain good dental care, visit our website at [www.deltadentalri.com](http://www.deltadentalri.com). You'll find valuable tips and information on a variety of related topics. Take our online Dental Risk Assessment survey and share the results with your dentist at your next appointment.

We've designed our website to help you manage your dental plan online. Setting up and managing your account is easy, fast and convenient. And it's environmentally friendly!

By registering an online account, you'll be able to:

- Check your specific benefits and coverage dates
- Review deductible and maximum amounts and confirm remaining balances
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